

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of the claims in the specification:

1-28. (Canceled)

29. (Currently Amended) A method of determining the presence and/or concentration of canine proBNP or Nt-proBNP fragments thereof comprising:
providing a canine blood-~~or urine~~ sample;
contacting the sample with at least one antibody that binds to at least one epitope in the Nt-proBNP region ~~consisting of amino acids 20 to 86~~ of canine proBNP; and
determining the presence and/or concentration of the canine proBNP and/or Nt-proBNP fragments thereof present in the sample by detecting the binding of the antibody to the epitope.

30. (Canceled)

31. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 29, wherein the at least one antibody binds to at least one epitope in the ~~region consisting of amino acids 25 to 41, 32 to 48, 55 to 65, or 74 to 86 of the canine proBNP~~ amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 1, SEQ ID NO: 2, SEQ ID NO: 3, or SEQ ID NO: 4.

32. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 29, wherein the at least one epitope comprises at least 3 amino acids.

33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 29, wherein the at least one antibody is polyclonal.

34. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 29, wherein at least one further antibody binds to the at least one antibody or to the at least one epitope.

35. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34, wherein the at least one antibody and/or the at least one further antibody is labeled.

36. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 35, wherein the at least one antibody and/or the at least one further antibody is labeled with peroxidase, biotin, fluorescent dye, gold colloid, or a radionuclide.

37. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 34, wherein the at least one antibody or the at least one further antibody is bound to a solid phase.

38. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 29, wherein the determination of canine proBNP or of fragments thereof comprises radioimmunoassay, immune binding assay, Western blot, immunohistochemistry, enzyme immunoassay, and/or a lateral flow device.

39-46. (Canceled)

47. (Currently Amended) A method comprising:
obtaining an antibody or an antibody mixture that binds to at least one epitope in the Nt-proBNP region ~~consisting of amino acids 20 to 86 of the~~ of canine proBNP; and
employing it in the method of claim 29.

48-56. (Canceled)

57. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 31, wherein the at least one antibody binds to at least one epitope in the ~~region consisting of amino acids 32 to 48 of the canine proBNP~~ amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 3.

58. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 29, wherein the at least one antibody is monoclonal.

59. (Canceled) The method of claim 29, wherein the canine sample is a blood sample.

60. (Currently Amended) The method of claim ~~[[59]]~~29, wherein the blood sample is serum.